

Central Falls School District

Board of Trustees

Minutes

6:00 PM

October 14, 2008

I. Call to Order:

Chairwoman, Ms. Ana Cano-Morales called the Central Falls School District Board of Trustees Meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Present were: Ms. Ana Cano-Morales, Chairwoman

Ms. Sonia Rodrigues, Vice Chairwoman

Ms. Mary Lou Perez

Ms. Ana Cecilia Rosado

Mr. Vladimir Ibarra

Mr. David Cruise

Ms. Leslie Estrada (6:37 PM)

II. Pledge:

Mr. Vladimir Ibarra led the Board in the Pledge of Alliance.

III. Policy and Planning:

A. Review student work – practice session

District Math Consultant Claire Pollard and District Literacy Consultant Barbra Halzel were both present to show and explain the various methods being used to teach students so that they can perform at or above grade level in math, literacy as well as other content areas. Actual student work was presented in order to give a better understanding of how a student's knowledge is assessed in the classroom and on the New England Common Assessment Program.

Board members actively engaged in the 40-minute presentation with questions and dialogue pertaining to the student work samples.

At the end of Ms. Pollard's presentation she informed the Board of the days that Math Consultant Deb Armitage would be in the District facilitating professional development.

Due to time constraints, Ms. Halzel was unable to give her presentation, but was asked to present at the next Board meeting.

B. Human Resources Commitment Policy Second Reading

Dr. Gallo stated that the policy had been drastically changed based on the Boards' comments and concerns from the first reading. She

also cited the various sources that were used in creating the document.

Ms. Cano-Morales suggested that the policy be distributed to all district staff for comment and feedback to make sure that the principles are reflective of the district staff and students.

Dr. Gallo stated that the document could be sent out to all district staff via email to solicit feedback from a wide variety of district staff.

Ms. Cano-Morales commented that she reviewed other ethics and professional standards in preparation for the meeting and found that every profession has these tenets, but that because she is not an educator would find that perspective valuable.

Ms. Rodrigues commented that some of the content was very specific and some was more general and questioned how to balance both, and if it would be better to have it one way versus using both. Ms. Cano-Morales also noted that she noticed the same thing and added that the Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE) had Professional Learning Standards and that could be a tie-in to the policy.

Ms. Perez commented that when she read the policy it reminded her of the district strategic plan.

Ms. Rosado stated that the document was very long and that some items could be easily merged. She commented that some of the language was not necessary and that it should be a code of conduct not ethics.

Ms. Morales suggested that the document be discussed further at the Board Retreat to be held on October 25 with the feedback received from staff. All members agreed.

Action: Reviewed and tabled until November meeting.

B. Early Dismissal Policy First Reading

Dr. Gallo explained that a revision was done in June of 2007 to the original policy but that two lines had been inadvertently omitted. In order to have the policy be at the appropriate legal standard those lines had to be added.

Ms. Rodrigues and Ms. Rosado suggested making some slight word changes in regards to 18 year-olds to make the policy clearer.

Action: Reviewed and revisions suggested.

IV. Consent Agenda:

Ms. Cano-Morales asked for a motion to approve the consent agenda.

Mr. Cruise made the motion to approve the consent agenda. The motion was seconded by Ms. Rodrigues.

The consent agenda was approved by the Board 7-0.

V. Superintendent's Report:

The Child Outreach Program that was mentioned last month had 500 screenings of children between the ages of 3 and 5 not referrals, of those 500 screenings 65 did result in referrals to special education and 60 qualified for special education. Ms. Rosado asked what the screening involved. Dr. Gallo commented that the testing was for hearing, vision and that it was a series of activities designed to determine how children are developing in a variety of areas. Ms. Rodrigues asked how students who are in early intervention are processed. Dr. Gallo replied that this is how they are referred.

The report cards for Grades 4 and 5 of this year will become standards-based. Last year, thanks to the work of Maureen Azar and the Feinstein group of teachers, the report card was developed and piloted throughout the year. Received parent feedback and made modifications with the 4th and 5th grades at the school. It will now go district-wide. Dr. Gallo also shared an article of the October issue of Educational Leadership that also talks about standards-based

learning and why it is used. Committees will be formed to look at Grade 3 report card and then K-2 primary report cards so that within a year we would be doing the same in all grades.

Report on nursing order. Dr. Alario, an Associate Professor of Pediatrics at Brown University and a pediatrician at Rhode Island Hospital, is the district physician for various districts in the State including Woonsocket and Providence. He has agreed to assist Central Falls with some interns from Brown to aid the nurses in their work and to provide some clinics to our families that might not be otherwise accessible. The nursing order should be reviewed every year by the doctor. They've been approved and will be included in the protocol.

The Wellness Committee reconvened with a full agenda for the year. They will continue to look at healthy snacks and food choices within the schools. They are also examining the curriculum in physical education to make sure that it is a fully standards-based as required by law. They have put together the flu clinic for November 20 for staff and will continue to enforce healthier habits in the district, such as walking to school.

Ms. Cano-Morales referred to a presentation given by Dr. Pat Flannigan in the summer regarding teen pregnancy and teen parenting in the Central Falls community. She asked if the Wellness Committee would be the proper committee to engage that issue. Dr.

Gallo referred to a community-wide committee, called RESPECT, which was formed as a result of that presentation. The meetings are held regularly at the Community Center. The information from those meetings will be given to the Wellness Committee.

VI. Public Comment:

No public comment.

VII. Next Board Meeting:

Next Board meeting will be held on November 12, 2008

VIII. School Board Comment/Communication:

Ms. Rosado had a comment on the SIT meeting notes that are provided by the schools. She noted that there was only one in the board packet. She state that she knows that the minutes are required and requested that they be included in their packets.

Ms. Cano-Morales also commented that she finds the SIT notes very telling of the culture of a school and of the work going on within the school. She requested seeing all the SIT notes from the schools on a regular basis.

Dr. Gallo commented that the board meeting in September was held much earlier than most of the SIT meetings, therefore many of the notes weren't included in the board packet. Moving forward the notes will be included for at least the prior month.

Ms. Cano-Morales referred to the Walking to School Wellness Initiative that the district is undertaking. She mentioned the article that appeared in The Times about the students walking to school with the Superintendent leading that walk. She referred to the controversy around the ownership of the grant, but was glad to see that it was cleared up and that the school district has taken the lead and that a considerable amount of funds were secured. The funds helped to add two police officers to the police department as well.

Ms. Cano-Morales spoke with the Board of Regents about the vote on the state budget, which includes Central Falls. She spoke of the major budget constraints and about the outside support and resources that the district has received and needs to continue to look for and secure.

Ms. Rodrigues asked when the budget talks and timeline would begin between the Trustees and the Superintendent.

Dr. Gallo replied that she was currently working on the 2010 budget. She stated that throughout the process the district has been thinning their ranks in terms of administration and central office in an effort to

provide more support to the schools so that there are more site-based people in place. The district is also moving toward using Unifund, one system of accounting; there will be a presentation soon.

IX. Executive Session and Adjournment of public session:

No executive session held. Meeting Adjourned at 7:20 PM.